

# HOW THE CZAREVITCH'S INCURABLE MALADY SPELLED DOOM FOR THE ROMANOFF DYNASTY, TOLD BY HIS FRENCH TUTOR

## CZARINA'S LOVE FOR SON UPSET RUSSIAN EMPIRE, SAYS PIERRE GILLIARD

Sharing Royal Family's Life For Ten Years, He Pictures Empress as Lost in Mother and How Her Anxiety for Boy Led to Exile and Death in the Greatest Tragedy of All History.

**A** VOICE from a dead empire speaks in these exclusive revelations of the Tragedy of Russia by Pierre Gilliard, tutor to the Czarevitch and to the Grand Duchesses, children of the Czar.

For the first time the intimate personal life of the Russian royal family is revealed here in all its dramatic pathos by the one man who knows. He will show how the incurable malady of the Czarevitch indirectly caused the greatest tragedy in history.

The articles to follow are the most authentic ever published on the subject. Their author was for ten years and more practically a member of the royal family. He ate with them at little private dinners and breakfasts, he enjoyed the confidence of the Emperor and Empress and the love of their children. What he writes comes from his own intimate personal knowledge.

By PIERRE GILLIARD

For Ten Years Tutor to the Czarevitch and to the Grand Duchesses, Children of the Czar.  
(Translated from the French.)  
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### PART I. PREFACE.

**I**N September, 1920, after three years of exile in Siberia, I was at last able to re-enter Europe. I retained a vivid remembrance of the poignant drama with which I had been intimately connected and its climax (the brutal murder of the Russian royal family) which I witnessed as one of the intimate attaches of the Emperor Nicholas II and his family.

It is the drama of a lifetime which I shall describe, such as I first observed in the brilliant surroundings of an ostentatious court, such as it later appeared to me in our captivity, when circumstances permitted me to share the intimacy of the sovereigns.

The crime of Ekaterinbourg, the execution of the czar, the czarina and their children, was in fact only the end of a cruel destiny, the denouement of one of the most touching tragedies ever enacted. I shall retrace the sorrowful stages and describe them.

The secret malady of the young czarevitch, heir to the throne, dominates the entire latter part of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas II, and it alone explains that reign.

I have striven in this book to bring back to life, as I knew them, the Emperor Nicholas II and his family, forcing myself to remain always impartial and to set forth with independent judgment the events of which I was an eye-witness.

It may be that, in my regard for the truth, I may furnish their political enemies with new arms for use against their memories, but I confidently hope that, from my revelations, their true personalities will be better understood by the world.

### CHAPTER I. (Autumn, 1905.)

**My First Lessons at Court.**  
IN the Autumn of 1904, I accepted an offer to serve a year as professor of French for Duke Sergius of Leuchtenberg.

The father of my pupil, Duke George Leuchtenberg, was the grandson of Europe de Beauharnais; on the side of his mother, the Grand Duchess Marie Nicolievna, daughter of Nicholas I, he was a cousin of the Emperor Nicholas II.

The family was then residing for the winter at its little estate on the shores of the Black sea. There the sad events of the spring of 1905 came to surprise us, and there we lived through the tragic hours provoked by the revolt of the Black Sea fleet, the bombardment of the coast, the pogroms and the violent repression that ensued. From the first, Russia revealed itself to me under a terrible aspect, laden with menace, a presage of the horrors and sufferings that awaited me there.

At the beginning of June the family came to occupy the beautiful villa of Sergievskaya Datcha, which the duke owned at Peterhof.

Peterhof has been the chosen retreat of Peter the Great, its founder, for repose from his labors in the building of St. Petersburg, which his imperial will caused to spring up, as if by enchantment, amid the marshes of the Neva estuary.

**THE CZAR'S RETREAT.**  
Everything at Peterhof recalls him who gave it birth. First, Marly, which he made for a time his residence, a "little house" on a strip of land separating two great basins of water. Then, near the gulf, the Hermitage, where he entertained his courtiers.

Then there is Monplaisir, a building in the Dutch style, which was his favorite residence, and whose terrace overhangs the sea.

Then, finally, is the Grand Palace, and its lakes, lagoons, fountains and beautiful park sur-

roundings which, in his view, rivalled the splendors of Versailles.

All these buildings, with the exception of the Grand Palace, which still is utilized for receptions, are vacant and abandoned edifices, to which the memory of the past alone can restore life.

The Emperor Nicholas II retained the predilection of his ancestors for Peterhof, and he came there every summer with his family to occupy the little Alexandria cottage surrounded by its thickly wooded park.

The family of the Duke of Leuchtenberg passed the summer of 1905 at Peterhof. Intercourse between Alexandria and Sergievskaya Datcha was frequent, because an intimate friendship then existed between the Empress and the Duchess. I thus had occasion to see the members of the imperial family from time to time.

### TAUGHT CZAR'S GIRLS.

At the expiration of my contract it was proposed that I remain as tutor to my pupil and to teach French to the Grand Duchesses Olga Nicolievna and Tatiana Nicolievna, eldest daughters of Nicholas II. I accepted, and after a short sojourn in Switzerland I returned to Peterhof early in September. Several weeks later I entered upon my new duties at court.

On the day fixed for my first lesson, a palace coach conveyed me to the Alexandria cottage, where were the Emperor and his family. Despite the coachman in livery, the carriage bearing the imperial arms, and the orders given in regard to me, I learned that it was difficult for anyone to gain admission to their majesties' residence.

I was stopped at the park gate and several minutes were spent in explanation and argument before I was allowed to enter.

Rounding a bend in the avenue I perceived two small brick buildings, connected by a covered bridge. These buildings were of such simplicity that I took them for lodges. Not until the coach stopped did I comprehend I had arrived at my destination.

### MEETS THE EMPRESS.

I was escorted to a small room on the second floor, furnished in the English style. The door opened and the Empress entered, clasping the hands of her two daughters, Olga and Tatiana. After several polite phrases she sat at the table and signed for me to sit opposite her. The children installed themselves on either side.

The Empress was still quite beautiful. She was tall and slender, carrying her head superbly. But all that ceased to count when one met her eyes, large gray-blue orbs, magnificently vivid, which reflected all the emotions of a vibrant soul.

The elder of the grand duchesses, Olga, then a little girl of ten, very blonde, eyes sparkling with malice, nose slightly turned up, examined me with a glance that seemed to seek the weak spot in my armor. But that child had such an air of simplicity and frankness as to win one's sympathy from the outset. The younger, Tatiana, slight and a

half years old, with chestnut hair, was prettier, but evinced less openness, frankness and spontaneity. **FIRST LESSON AN ORDEAL.**

The lesson began. I was astonished, embarrassed even, by the simplicity of the situation.

The Empress did not miss one of my words. I had a definite feeling that it was not a lesson I was giving; I was undergoing an inspection. The disproportion between my expectation and the reality upset me. To increase my misfortune I had calculated that my pupils would be much more advanced in their studies than they were. I had chosen certain exercises, which proved far too difficult. I had to improvise, to adopt expedients.

Finally, to my great relief, the clock struck the hour and ended my ordeal.

During the weeks that followed the Empress regularly attended her daughter's lessons, in which she took visible interest.

It often happened after her daughters had left us, that she discussed methods and measures to be employed in teaching languages, and I always was struck by her perspicacity.

Especially do I remember a lesson one or two days before the manifesto of October, 1905, which authorized the Duma.

### QUEEN LOST IN WOMAN.

The Empress that day had seated herself in an armchair near the window. She appeared absent-minded and preoccupied, her features involuntarily betraying the trouble of her mind. She sought to focus her attention on us again, but soon fell into a mournful reverie.

Her work lay on her knees. She had crossed her hands and seemed lost in thought.

Habitually, at the end of the lesson hour, I closed my book and waited until, by rising, the Empress

## ROYAL COUPLE AND HEIR



**A**N interesting study of the Czarina, photographed in the intimacy of her home as she embroidered, an art in which she excelled.

gave me permission to leave. But this time she was so plunged in meditation that she gave me no sign. The minutes passed. The children became impatient.

I opened my book and resumed reading. A quarter of an hour elapsed. Then one of the little grand duchesses, approaching her mother, called her attention to the time.

After several months the Empress assigned one of her ladies of honor, the Princess Obolenskaya, to attend my lessons in her stead. She thus marked the end of the test to which she had subjected me. This change soiled me. I was more at ease in presence of the Princess Obolenskaya. But from those first months I have retained a precise recollection of the extreme interest which the Empress as a mother entirely devoted to her duty, took in the education of her children.

Instead of the haughty and cold Tsarina so much talked about, I had found a woman simply devoted to her maternal task. At this period also I was enabled,

by certain indications, to conclude that her reserve, by which many persons considered themselves wounded and that brought upon her so much hostility, was rather a natural timidity, a mask for her sensitiveness.

A single instance will illustrate the care for exactitude that animated the empress in her solicitude for her daughters. It shows also the regard for their tutors which she strove to inspire in them.

As long as she attended my lessons I always, on entering the room, found the lesson and copy-books placed carefully on the table before the chair of each of my pupils. I never had to wait an instant. This was not the case later.

To my first pupils, Olga and Tatiana, were added successively, when they had reached their ninth year, Marie, in 1907, and Anastasia, in 1909.

The health of the empress, jeopardized already by the disquietude caused by the menace held sus-

pended over the life of the tsarevitch, prevented her more and more from giving attention to the studies of her daughters.

I did not then comprehend the reason for her apparent indifference, and I was disposed to hold it as a grievance against her, but it was not long before certain events taught me to understand it.

### CHAPTER II. The Royal Family in the Crimea. (Autumn, 1911, and Spring, 1912.)

At Spala.  
(Autumn, 1912.)

**T**HE imperial family was accustomed to pass the winter at Tsarskoe-Selo, a pretty little country town some twelve miles south of Petrograd. It stands on an eminence whose highest point is occupied by the grand palace, favored abode of Catherine II.

Not far off, in a park dotted with small artificial lakes, there rises half hidden by trees, a building much more modest, the Alexander palace. Emperor Nicholas II had made it his habitual residence since 1905.

The emperor and empress occupied the ground floor of one wing of the palace, and their children the floor above. The central part contained the state apartments. The opposite wing was occupied by certain persons of the imperial suite. Such was the setting, which corresponded so well with the modest tastes of the imperial family.

### SEES INFANT CZAREVITCH.

It was there that in February, 1906, I saw for the first time the Tsarevitch, Alexis Nicolievitch, then a year and a half old.

I had come that day, as usual, to the Alexander Palace, where my duties called me a good many times a week.

I was about to finish my lesson with Olga Nicolievna when the empress entered, carrying the little grand duke, heir to the throne. She advanced with the evident intention of showing him to me. You could see in her the overflowing joy of a mother who has at last seen her dearest wish fulfilled. She seemed proud and happy over the beauty of her son.

The little Tsarevitch was then, truly, a most superb baby, with his beautiful blond curls, his big grey-blue eyes shaded by long, curled lashes. He had the fresh and rosy complexion of a child in the best of health, and when he smiled you could see two little dimples in his plump cheeks.

### THE HEIR TO A THRONE.

As I approached him, he looked at me with a serious, somewhat frightened air, and only after much hesitation did he offer me his little hand.

I noticed that the empress, several times clutched the Tsarevitch with the tender gesture of a mother who seems always to fear for the

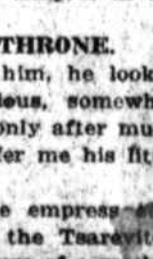
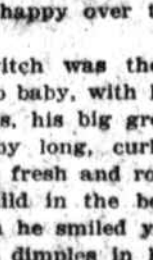
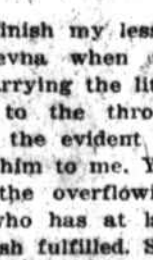
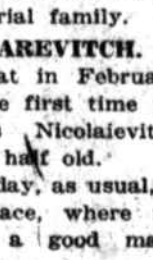
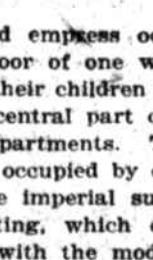
life of her child, but with her this caress and the look that accompanied it revealed a secret anguish so poignant, that I was instantly struck with it.

In the years that followed I had more frequent occasion to see Alexis Nicolievitch, who now and then escaped from his sailor guards, and ran into the study hall where his sisters were, and whither his guardians hastened to recapture him. At various periods, however, his visits would suddenly cease, and for quite a long time he was seen no more.

Each of these disappearances threw all occupants of the palace into profound discouragement, which betrayed itself in my pupils by a sadness they essayed in vain to hide.

When I questioned them, they sought to elude my queries, answering me in an evasive manner.

The Czarevitch, whose illness wrecked throne, is shown at left playing with his pet dog during a convalescent period.



**An intimate picture of Emperor Nicholas II, Czar of all the Russias, taken in an army uniform when he little dreamed of exile and death.**

by saying that Alexis Nicolievitch was indisposed. I knew, however, that he was attacked by a malady to which they referred in veiled phrases, and the precise nature of which none could tell me.

### AT TSARSKOIE-SELO.

As I have said before, having been relieved in 1909 of my duties as tutor to the Duke of Sergius of Leuchtenberg, I could devote more time to the grand duchess. I resided in St. Petersburg, and appeared five times each week at Tsarskoe-Selo. Although the number of my lessons had been considerably increased, my pupil's progress was slow, the more because the imperial family made visits of several months' duration to the Crimea. I regretted that a French governess had not been engaged for them, and on their return I noticed that they had forgotten a great deal.

Mile. Tchécheva, their devoted Russian governess, could not do everything. To remedy this, the Empress asked me to accompany the imperial family when they next left Tsarskoe-Selo for a prolonged trip.

The first journey I made under these new conditions was to the Crimea in the autumn of 1911. I resided in the little town of Yalta, with my colleague, M. Petrof, professor of Russian, invited, like myself, to continue as an instructor. We went each day to Livadia to give our lessons.

Outside of our duties we were free, and could enjoy the fine climate of the "Russian Riviera" without being hampered by court formalities.

In the spring of the following year the imperial family again spent several months in the Cri-

## Tutor of Future Czar Regarded As Intimate Member of the Royal Family.

mea. M. Petrof and I were lodged in a small pavilion in the park at Livadia. We took our meals with certain officers and court functionaries. Members of the imperial suite and certain invited guests alone were admitted to luncheon with the imperial family, who, in the evening, dined together in strict privacy.

But, several days after our arrival, the Empress, wishing to mark by a delicate attention her esteem for those to whom she confided the education of her children, caused us to be invited to the imperial table by the court chamberlain.

I was deeply touched, but the repast imposed a rather fatiguing constraint, although court etiquette, on ordinary days, was not very exacting.

My pupils also seemed bored at these long luncheons and it was with pleasure that we met later in the study hall, to resume, in all simplicity, our afternoon readings.

I saw little enough of Alexis Nicolievitch. He almost always took his meals with the empress in her private apartments.

We returned on June 10 to Tsarskoe-Selo, and the imperial family appeared shortly afterward at Peterhof, whence they departed each summer for their customary yachting cruises on the Standard in the fjords of Finland.

### TEACHES CZAREVITCH.

At the beginning of September, 1912, the imperial family went on a hunting trip in the forest of Bieloveje, in the province of Grodne, where they spent two weeks. Then they went to Spala, in Poland, the ancient hunting ground of the kings, for a more prolonged stay. There I rejoined them at the end of September with M. Petrof.

Shortly after my arrival the empress announced that she desired me to be tutor to the Tsarevitch Alexis. I gave him his first lesson on October 2 in presence of his mother.

The child, then eight and a half years old, did not know one word of French. My lessons soon were interrupted, for Alexis, who from the first had appeared to be suffering, had to take to his bed.

My colleague and I had been struck on our arrival with the boy's pallor, and that he was carried about, as if incapable of walking. His malady we concluded must be serious.

Several days later it was whispered about that his condition was causing acute apprehension, and that Profs. Raichfuss and Fiodrof had been summoned from St. Petersburg to attend him.

Nevertheless life went on there as in the past; one hunting party succeeding another, and the guests more numerous than ever.

### A PRINCE IN AGONY.

One evening after dinner the Grand Duchess Marie and Anastasia were in the dining hall playing two scenes from the "Bourgeois Gentleman" before their majesties, the members of the imperial suite and several guests.

Acting as prompter, I had hidden myself behind a screen which served as a wing, and by leaning forward a little I could perceive the empress, in the front row of spectators, smiling and animated, chatting with her neighbors.

The play having come to an end, I left by the service door and found myself in the passage in front of the room of the tsarevitch, whose cries I heard distinctly.

Suddenly I saw the empress, who came running, lifting with both hands, in her haste, her long gown which hindered her movements. I hid in a doorway and she passed without noticing me. Her features were contorted with anguish.

I returned to the hall, where the animation was intense. Livered lackeys were serving refreshments. Everyone was laughing, joking. The evening's enjoyment was at its height.

### MASKS ROYAL GRIEF.

The empress re-entered the room several minutes later. She had again assumed her mask, forcing herself to smile on those who came to pay eager court. But I remarked that the emperor, even in conversation, had placed himself so as to keep an eye on the door, and I caught, in passing, the glance of despair the empress cast at him from the threshold.

An hour later I went to my room, still profoundly disturbed by that scene, which had suddenly enabled me to comprehend the drama of that double existence.

However, though the sick boy's condition became still more aggravated, the life of the court suffered hardly any change. The Empress, indeed, showed herself more and more rarely, but the Emperor, repressing his disquietude, continued

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 1.)